

# Duxbury's John Parker 'Home'

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DUXBURY — To course Superintendent John Parker, the Duxbury Yacht Club golf course is more than just a place to work.

John is a direct descendent of the Aldens, of Mayflower fame, and a third generation Parker who have called only Duxbury "home."

Sitting in the yacht club clubhouse, John glanced around and mused, "This place brings back many happy memories of my early years."

What John was referring to was the fact that before the building now serving as the clubhouse was a clubhouse, it was the barn of his family homestead.

"My grandfather bought this barn from Seth Sprague, the original owner, and our house stood out there," said John pointing to the practice putting surface. "My dad then moved in with our family after our grandparents passed away."

At that time, there was a golf course here in addition to the farm. In 1926, the present course was constructed by Mr. Walter Prince, and in 1927 the Duxbury Yacht Club purchased the property of the Parker Farm Associates, which now meant that the buildings and the course were owned by the club.

"When we sold the house and buildings, dad built the house on the corner of Harrison (on the road leading to the clubhouse) Street, which mother designed." The house John was referring to is a delightful Cape Codder now owned by the Sullivan family.

The barn, now the clubhouse, was erected in 1780, and remodeled for the golf and tennis use in 1938.

"There were double doors on both ends of the barn then, with a water tower running up the middle. The tower was wooden and we also had a windmill to pump out water."

"I can remember jumping the tower and dad reminding me not to put our knees up as we landed so we wouldn't kick any teeth out."

The barn is constructed with wooden beams and John pointed out how several of them were rounded and smoothed down as a result of the cows rubbing against them.

"Our front where the new practice putting green is now, there was a corn silo," smiled John. "One day when I was six years old, and dad was away, I took the 'juice' from the silo and kept feeding it to the cows and they really loved it."

"By the time dad arrived home, all the cows were drunk, and boy did I catch the dickens."

John's golf career began as a caddy, which he did until 1932, and even then he mixed a little mischief with his work.

"When they were reconstructing the course, one afternoon the workers left the tractor on the bank of the seventh green, and while they were at lunch, I decided to give it a try."

"Well, the thing just took off backwards and ended up in the brook at the foot of the incline, and I ran like mad."

After his caddy career, John went to work in Boston at the fish pier until 1950.

At this time, John bought and operated Chandlers Express, and married the former Jayne Wansker. They now have three children.

In 1959, he sold the express company and went to work as a greens keeper for Course Superintendent John Mileski.

John worked as an assistant for six years until last summer when one week before the

annual member-guest, Mileski was stricken with a heart ailment and John took over.

When Mileski was unable to return, Parker was made superintendent.

"The people at Marshfield, Cohasset and Hatherly were wonderful to me in the time of crises, and I can't thank them enough for their kind help."

"If it weren't for them and several other wonderful people,

I don't know what would have happened."

Things have settled down for John now and the course is running smoothly.

Last summer a sprinkling system was installed on three fairways and five tees and greens, and John has four men working for him in the summer with, one full-time.

During the past winter, the club sent John to a refresher

course at the University of Massachusetts Turf School, offered to superintendents and assistants. "That was quite an experience, a great deal of help to me," stated John.

Golf is John's first love in sports, and he enjoys the opportunity to get out and hit a few once in a while. Despite the fact that he doesn't get out much, he still is able to score in the 80's at Duxbury.

As he walked up the hill to his shop, which was the original clubhouse for the Duxbury Yacht Club, John paused and said, "I can just picture the old horses pulling the mowers for the fairways, they used to put slipper-type coverings on their hooves so they wouldn't sink in the soft spots on the fairways — this place has loads of wonderful memories for me."

John's only regret is that he did not go right to work for Mr. Lucey, then professional, instead of to the fish pier way back in 1932.

Always sporting a wide smile and a cheery "hello," John is a part of the Duxbury Yacht Club course, and one of the finest gentlemen in the game.